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THE
Bishop of *BANGOR*'s
DOCTRINE
Prov'd from the
WRITINGS
OF THE
Latin and Greek Fathers.

1718

THE
DOCTRINE
OF THE
FATHERS
OF THE
CHURCH

THE
Bishop of *BANGOR*'s
DOCTRINE

Prov'd to be

Sound and Orthodox,

FROM THE

WRITINGS

OF THE

Latin and Greek Fathers :

BEING

A Further Confutation of his Double-
dealing and Malicious Opposers.

In Three Chapters.

By PHILAETHES.

L O N D O N,

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THE
BISHOP OF A.W.G.O.M.
DOCTRINE

FROM THE
WRITINGS

OF THE
LATE AND GREAT

AND GREAT

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C H A P. I.

The SCRIPTURE, according to the Judgment of the Ancient Fathers, is the sole Judge of Controversies, and Interpreter of itself.

BUfaus, the Jesuit, knowing that the Scriptures were not such evident Testimonies of the Roman Faith, as his Fellows pretended; by Way of Prevention gives this *Caveat* to his Disciples: viz. 'If you cannot avoid Disputation with an Heretick, touching Points of Faith, altho' you find you are able to match him, yet first demand of him, from whence he will derive his Arguments against the Catholick Faith; if he answer (as commonly they do) out of the sacred Scriptures; tell him there is no Victory, at least but uncertain, to be hoped for from them, unless it may appear who hath best Right to the Scriptures, and to whom belongs Authority to expound them.' By this Jesuit's Confession, the Points in Controversy are *sub Judice in*

Question, to which Side the Right of Scriptures do belong, and to whom Authority to expound them; and pretends it is Truth to say, That the Controversies of this Age are now brought to this narrow Issue, that our Adversaries are content to try their Cause by Scriptures, if the Reformed Churches wou'd grant them but this poor Request; That they may be sole Judges, and Interpreters of them. A Request, no doubt, which in most Mens Understanding, will appear highly unreasonable, That Christ, and his Apostles shou'd be judg'd by Man; or that a Man shou'd be Plaintiff and Judge in his own Cause. It was the constant Profession of *St. Austin*, viz. 'Men spiritual, whether they rule, or be ruled, judge according to the Spirit; but they judge not of the spiritual Knowledge, which shineth in the Firmament, (of the Scriptures;) for it is not lawful for any Man to judge over so high Authority: For be the Man never so spiritual, yet must he be a Doer, not a Judge of the Law.' And in the Conclusion of the Chapter he gives his special Reason for it; viz. 'There a Man is said to be Judge, where he hath Power and Authority to correct.' He, therefore, who shall first dare to correct the Scripture, let that Man by *St. Austin's* Rule assume Authority to judge: And as touching that Tenet, That a Man shou'd be Plaintiff and Judge in his own Cause, is a Doctrine so different from the Primitive Church, that in the Midst of
Here-

Heresies, I say, in the first and best Ages, wherein St. *Austin* and *Epiphanius* mention above eighty Heresies; even then, when the Fathers had greatest Reason to stand upon the Priviledge of their Church, they never made Answer (like the *Romanists* and their Partizans;) You must hear the Church, and our Church is that Catholick Church, that is the sole Judge of Controversies, and according to our Interpretation (whose Right it is to judge of the Scriptures) it is so and so; but on the contrary, they made the Scriptures sole Judges of their Cause, and withal profess'd, *The Text of Scripture was the truest Gloss in Expounding of itself.*

I speak not this, as if our moderate Divines did make the Scriptures sole Judge exclusive of the Testimony of the Church; neither do they deny the Authority of the Fathers, who jointly agree in Points of Faith, for the right Expounding of the Scriptures; only we say, the Author of the Word, who best knew his own Meaning, was best able to expound himself; and in this manner the Ancient Fathers, as they grounded their Church upon the Scriptures, so they, likewise, referr'd back the Meaning of the Scriptures unto the Author of them; that He, who was Judge of all Men, shou'd be judged of none. And such, we know is the Wisdom and Goodness of God, that he hath oftentimes hid these Things from the Wise and Learned, which he has reveal'd unto the simple and illiterate; and, 'As for those
' Things

‘ Things which it hideth in Misteries (saith
 ‘ *Austin*) it doth not lift them up with
 ‘ stately Speech, whereby an unlearned Mind
 ‘ shou’d not presume to approach as a poor
 ‘ Man to a rich, but with a lowly Speech
 ‘ inviteth all Men, that it might not only
 ‘ feed them with manifest, but also exercise
 ‘ ’em with obscure Truth, having that in
 ‘ plain, that it hath in obscure Places:’ And
 as concerning obscure Places, the same holy
 Father tells us, that ‘ If they cannot see the
 ‘ Things which are obscure and dark in the
 ‘ Scriptures, the Defect is in themselves, and
 ‘ not in the Precepts; as if I shou’d point
 ‘ with my Finger at a Star, which they
 ‘ wou’d gladly see, and their Eye-sight were
 ‘ so weak, that tho’ they saw my Finger,
 ‘ yet they cou’d not see the Star at which I
 ‘ point; let them cease to blame me, and
 ‘ let them pray to God, that he wou’d give
 ‘ them Eye-sight.’

And in his four Books of *Christian Doctrine*,
 where he purposely treats of Expounding the
 Scriptures, he plainly proves, that the Mean-
 ing of the Word is learn’d out of (or from)
 the Word, and the obscure Places are ex-
 pounded by those that are plain and easy;
 and herein he toucheth the Free-hold of the
Roman Church: ‘ For (*saith he*) in this
 ‘ great Plenty of Scriptures, we are fed with
 ‘ plain Things, and exercis’d with obscure;
 ‘ those drive away Hunger, these Contempt;
 ‘ the Holy Ghost having temper’d them so
 ‘ of purpose:’ And then this great Father
 con-

concludes with the Tenet of our Church ;
viz. ‘ There is scarce any thing drawn out
 ‘ of these obscure Places, which hath not
 ‘ been spoken (*quod not planissime,*) most
 ‘ plainly some other where.

Neither was this the Opinion of this
 Learned Father only, but it was the Con-
 fession of St. *Ambrose* ; *viz.* ‘ There is much
 ‘ Obscurity in the Scriptures, but withal, if
 ‘ thou knock at the Door with the Hand of
 ‘ thy Understanding, thou shalt gather by
 ‘ little and little, the Reason of that which
 ‘ is there spoken, and the Door shall be open’d
 ‘ unto thee ; (*non ab alio, sed á verbo Dei ;*)
 ‘ and that by no other but by the Word of
 ‘ God itself.

And with these Doctors of the *Latin*
 Church agree the *Greek* Fathers : ‘ Behold
 ‘ (*saith Basil*) now hear the Scripture ex-
 ‘ pounding itself, yea, (*saith he*) what Things
 ‘ be, or seem to be covertly spoken in some
 ‘ Places of Holy Scripture, the same are ex-
 ‘ pounded by other plain Places elsewhere.

And (*saith Chrysostom*) ‘ Let us follow
 ‘ the Scope of the Holy Scriptures in inter-
 ‘ preting of itself ; when it teacheth some
 ‘ hard Thing, it expoundeth itself, and suf-
 ‘ fereth not the diligent (and intelligent)
 ‘ Hearer to err. Let us not fear, therefore,
 ‘ (*saith he*) to put ourselves with full Sail
 ‘ into the Sea of Scriptures, because we shall
 ‘ be sure to find the Word of God for our
 ‘ Pilot.’ And lastly, as it were fore-stalling
 that Popish Opinion, *That the Scriptures are*
ob-

obscure, and; therefore, not to be read by the vulgar People; he elegantly incites a *Gentile* to the Reading them, by a familiar and common Reason; *viz.* ‘When thou buyest a Garment, tho’ thou have no Skill in weaving, yet thou sayest not, *I cannot buy it, they will deceive me*; but thou dost use all Means to learn how to know it: Do, therefore, those Things that are to be done; seek all those Things of God, and he will reveal them unto thee.’ So that if any Doubt or Difference happened in the Primitive Church amongst the true believing Christians, they referr’d the Determination of it to the Inquest of Christ, and his Apostles, and they only were made the sole Judges of the Question.

The Resolution of the Ancient Father *Optatus*, in the Question betwixt the Catholicks and Hereticks, whether one shou’d be twice baptiz’d; may serve for a Proof, and full Conclusion of the Premises; *viz.* ‘You say, (*said he*) it is lawful; we say, it is not lawful; between yours it is lawful, and ours it is not lawful, the Peoples Souls do doubt and waver; let none believe you nor us; we are contending Parties, Judges must be sought for: If Christians, they cannot be given on both Sides; (for Truth is hinder’d by Affections.) A Judge without must be sought for; if a *Paynim*, he cannot know the Christian Misteries; if a *Jew*, he is an Enemy to Christian Baptism: No Judgment, therefore, of this Matter can be found

‘ found on Earth, a Judge in Heaven must
 ‘ be sought for. But why knock we at Hea-
 ‘ ven, when we have the Testament of the
 ‘ most holy and immaculate Jesus in the Go-
 ‘ spel.” And thus I have briefly shew’d you
 the deputed Judges, and Interpreters of the
 Scripture in the Primitive Church, now let
 us observe by what Rule the Scriptures are
 expounded in the Roman Church.

C H A P. II.

*The Romanists, tho’ they pretend by taking
 an Oath to make the Fathers Interpreters
 of the Scriptures, yet, indeed, they make
 themselves sole Interpreters of Scriptures
 and Fathers.*

IT is an Article of the Roman *Bulla Pii quar.*
Creed, publish’d by Pope Pius *Art. 2.*
 the Fourth, and by the Oath
 their Fore-man has taken, all Priests and Je-
 suits are sworn, *Not to receive, or interpret the*
Scriptures, but according to the uniform Consent of
Fathers. It is a large and fair Promise, and
 deliver’d upon Oath; and for my part, if
 the Church of *Rome* can make good the uni-
 form Consent of Fathers, for all their Twelve
 new Articles of Faith, (which has been often
 B pro-

promis'd, but never as yet by any One perform'd that I know of;) I shall willingly believe their Interpretation, and prefer it before any private, or later Exposition. It was

*Apolog. for the
Oath of Alleg.
p. 36.*

the Profession of a King of England of famous Memory, viz. *Whatever the Fathers of the first four hundred Years did with one unanime Consent agree upon, to be believ'd as a necessary Point to Salvation, I will believe it also; or at least will be humbly silent, not taking upon me to condemn the same.*

I speak not this, as if we shou'd decline the Practice of the Ancient Church in Expounding Scripture by Scripture; but to demonstrate to the World, that our Adversaries in this Point of their Faith, have neither follow'd the ancient Church, nor the Decree of their Trent Council; whereby it shall appear, that either this Article was newly created, or the former Popes and Councils have disagreed from the latter.

*Concil Trid.
Sess. 1.*

Cardinal *Cajeton* was so far from subscribing to the Pope's Creed in this Point, that on the contrary, he gives this Præmonition to the

Reader of the Scriptures; *Not to loath the new Sense of Them, for this, that it dissenteth from the ancient Doctors; but let him search more exactly the Text and Coherence of the Scriptures; and if he find it to agree, to praise God that hath not ty'd the Exposition of them, to the Sense of the ancient Doctors.* This Protestant

Doc-

Doctrin is far different from the Tenet of the *Roman Church*, insomuch that Bishop *Cannus*, his Fellow Romanist, was much troubl'd, that a prime Cardinal shou'd oppose an Article of the *Roman Creed*: One while he charges him, that *Acutius multò quam feliciter*; He expounded the Scriptures *Can loci. The- more wittily than happily*: Another *ol. lib. 7. c. 3.* while, he wou'd seem so to excuse him, that he might be convinc'd by this, or the like Argument, *viz. To follow the Fathers in all, were to condemn our own Wits, and deprive ourselves of the Means to find out the Truth.* What Arguments might prevail with the Cardinal, I know not, but sure I am, his Doctrin disagreed from the Article of the *Roman Faith*. And *Andradias*, a principal Pillar of the *Trent Council*, rebukes *Cannus*, for his rash reproving *Cajetan*, and defends his Tenet with the same Doctrin. He teaches, that *When the Fathers seek the literal Sense of the Scriptures, they do not always find them, but give divers Senses one unlike to another.* He professes, *We may forsake their Senses all, and bring a new unlike to theirs.* He adds further, that *Experience forceth us to confess, unless we will be unthankful to most excellent Wits, that very many Things in Moses, and the Prophets, are, in this our Age, expounded more exactly, by the Diligence of Learned Men, than ever they were before.* And thereupon he concludes, that *The Holy Ghost (the only faithful Interpreter of the Scriptures)* wou'd have many things to be known to us, which our Ancestors knew

not, and hath wrought by Means unknown to us ; that the Fathers noted good, and godly Mysteries out of very many Places of the Scriptures, whereof the right and natural Sense hath been found out by Posterity. And thus Canus against Cajetan, and Andradius against Canus, and Cajetan and Andradius both against the Trent Article, allow the Exposition of Scripture by Scripture, and sometimes against the Stream of Fathers. I proceed to the Examination of more Witnesses, and I call Cardinal Bellarmine to testi-

*Bell. de verbo
Dei. Lib. 3.
cap. 10.*

fy the same Doctrine, that neither he, nor his Associates, do hold themselves ty'd by their new Article of Faith, to the Exposition of the Fathers: *It is one thing* (says he) *to interpret the Law as a Doctor, another thing as a Judge ; of the one is requir'd Learning, of the other Authority ; the Opinion of the Doctor is to be follow'd according to Reason ; but the Judge's Opinion is to be follow'd of Necessity. St. Austin, and the Fathers in their Expositions, supply'd the Places of Doctors, which we may follow as we see Cause ; the Pope, and Council supply the Places of Judges with a Commission from God ; and, therefore, they must be observ'd, and follow'd of Necessity.*

Thus we have seen three several Judges and Expositors of the Scriptures. First, the ancient Fathers made the Scriptures the only Judges, and true Interpreters of themselves ; Next, the Trent Doctors decreed the ancient Fathers for Interpreters ; and now at length the later Schoolmen have proclaim'd their

Popes

Popes and Councils for the chiefeſt Judges of the Scriptures; and *Theſe* (ſay they) *muſt be follow'd of Neceſſity*. But we ſay *Neceſſity is a deadly dart*; there is no *Neceſſity* by their Doctrines to obey the Expositions of Fathers, (which is the ſecond Article of their Faith) but there is a *Neceſſity* to obey the Authority of their late *Popes and Councils*, in their Expositions, which is but Matter of Opinion; and from hence it will follow, that either the Articles of the *Roman Creed* were newly created by Pope *Pius* the Fourth, and that Creation was not in his Power; or that thoſe Doctors and Cardinals had not the Oath adminiſter'd unto 'em; or we may juſtly ſuſpect they have forſworn themſelves. Neither was this the Opinion of theſe particular Men only, but the *Roman Church* (notwithſtanding their ſolemn Proteſtation, by which they are enjoin'd to interpret the Scriptures) does, in many Things, wave the Interpretation of the Fathers. It is the

Teſtimony of *Baronius*, *Altho' the moſt holy Fathers, whom, for their great Learning, we rightly term the Doctors of the Church, were endow'd*

Baron. Ann.
Tom. I. ad An.
34. nu. Mar.
213.

above others with the Grace of God's holy Spirit, yet the Catholick Roman Church doth not follow them always, and in all things expounding of the Scriptures. Here is another Confeſſion of a great Cardinal (who was not ignorant of the Articles of his Faith, that) notwithſtanding the *Trent Decree*, and the Pope's Bull, the Church did not always follow the

Ex-

Exposition of the Fathers. Now if any shall require a Reason, why the Pope and Cardinals of former Ages dissent from others of these later Times, in Expounding of the Scriptures; Friar *Stella*, who does not condemn the Exposition giv'n by the ancient Doctors, protesteth, *He knows very well, that Pygmies being put upon Giants Shoulders, do see further than the Giants themselves.* But Bishop *Fisher* does more warily excuse it, and with plausible Reasons assures us, that *Many things, as well before the Gospel, as in the rest of the Scriptures, are now more exquisitely discuss'd by modern Wits, and more clearly understood than they have been formerly; either by reason the Ice was not then broken unto the Ancients, neither did their Age suffice to weigh exactly that whole Sea of Scriptures, or because in this most large Field of Scriptures, even after the most diligent Reapers, some Ears will remain to be gather'd, as yet un-touch'd.*

How forcible Motives these Reasons may seem to other Men, I will not here dispute; sure I am, they are vain Excuses for *Roman* Bishops and Cardinals, who are bound by their *General Council* and the *Pope's Bull*, to obey the Exposition of Fathers as an Article of their Faith.

But admit these Opinions shou'd be excus'd for the particular Tenets of some private Men, let us see how faithfully others, Popes and Pastors, of these later Times, have interpreted the Scriptures, with the uniform Consent of Fathers.

Moses

Moses saith, *God made Man after his Image.*
Pope Adrian interpreteth, therefore, Images must be set up in Churches.

Whit. & Camp.
S. Rat. p. 269.

St. Peter saith, *Behold here are two Swords :*
Pope Boniface concludes, Therefore the Pope has Power over the Spiritual, and the Temporal.

Extra. de major. & obed.

St. Mathew saith, *Give not that which is holy unto Dogs.* But *Harding*, expounding this Place, saith, Therefore it is not lawful for the vulgar People to read the Scriptures.

Jewel's Defen.
P. 52.

St. John saith, *There shall be one Fold, and one Shepherd.* *Johannes de Paris* tells us, This Place cannot be expounded of Christ; but must be taken for some Minister ruling in his Stead.

Joh. de Par. de Pot.
Reg. & Papati. c. 30.

The Prophet *David* saith, *Thou hast put all things under his Feet.* *Antoninus* expounds it, Thou hast made all Things subject to the Pope; the Cattle of the Field, that is to say, Men living in the Earth; The Fishes of the Sea, i. e. the Souls in Purgatory; The Fowls of the Air, i. e. the Souls of the Blessed in Heaven. And lastly, whereas our Saviour witnesseth of himself, *All Power is giv'n to me both in Heaven and Earth.* *Stephen*, Archbishop of *Patraca*, apply'd those very Words to *Pope Leo*, the Tenth, in the Council of *Lateran*, in the Audience of the Pope himself, who thankfully accepted it, and suffer'd it to be publish'd and printed. And (as it is rightly ob-

observ'd by Learned *Du Moulin*) Pope *Innocent* the Third, in his Book of the *Mysteries of the Mass*, the Book of *Sacred Ceremonies*, *Durant's Rationals*, *Tolet*, and *Titleman*, with many others, do most ridiculously wrest the Scriptures, altogether different from their right Meaning, and the Expositions of the Fathers: As for Instance, the Scripture saith, *The Rock was Christ*: Therefore, say they, the Altar must be of Stone. It is written, *I am the Light of the World*: Therefore, Tapers must be set upon the Altar. It is written, *Let him kiss me with the Kisses of his Mouth*: Therefore the Priest must kiss the Altar. It is written, *Thou shalt see my Back-parts*: Therefore the Priest must turn his Back to the People. It is written, *Wash me again*: Therefore the Priest must wash his Hands twice. It is written, *Put off thy Shoes, for this Place is holy*: Therefore the Bishop at *Mass* changes his Hose and Shoes. And lastly, The Pope himself at his Coronation, casteth certain Copper or Brass Money amongst the People, using the Words of *Peter*, *Silver and Gold have I none, but that which I have, I give thee*.

These, and the like Expositions do much resemble the strict Order of *Monks*, who reading the Words in *Mathew*, (*He that taketh not up his Cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me*;) made themselves Wooden Crosses, and so carry'd them at their Backs continually, causing all the World to laugh at them: For, however they may seem to be the Expositions

*Joh. de Polem-
ar. orat. in
Concil. Basil.*

positions of some private Spirits, yet he who makes Oath *in verbo Sacerdotis*, to receive, and expound the Scriptures, with the uniform Consent of Fathers, and shall render such Expositions of the Text, can be no true Catholick.

‘ For whosoever does otherwise understand the Scripture (says *Hierom*) than the Sense of the Holy Ghost, who is the Penman of the Scripture, requires, altho’ he hath not departed from the Church, yet he may be termed an Heretick.” But (as the *Friar* said wittily in his Sermon) the *Truth* which he preach’d was like Holy Water, which every One call’d for apace, yet when it was cast on them, they let it fall on their Backs. In like manner the *Romanists* seemingly call for the Scriptures, they commonly vaunt, that they expound, and receive them according to the uniform Consent of Fathers; but (as *Vincentius Lyrinensis* said of the Hereticks of his Time) ‘ When they shall begin not only to utter those Sayings, but also to expound them, then the Bitterness, then the Soueriness and Madness is perceiv’d; then a new devised Poyson will be breathed out, then are profane Novelties disclos’d, then may you see the Bounds of the ancient Fathers to be remov’d, the Catholick Faith to be then butcher’d, and the Doctrine of the (Primitive) Church torn in pieces.

Pope *Pius* the Fourth, who first publish’d the Articles of the *Creed*, was not ignorant,
 C that

Hierom. 24.

q. 3. cap. *Hæresis.*

that the Scriptures must be far fetch'd, and hardly strain'd, to make them speak for the *Trent* Doctrine; he well understood, that it was too general, and strict a Tye upon every *Mass Priest*, to receive, and interpret the Scriptures with the uniform Consent of Fathers; (knowing well, that many *Mass Priests* were utterly ignorant of the Fathers;) and, therefore, to qualify the Rigour of that Oath, adjoined these Words to the aforesaid Article,

Artic. 2. *Also that sacred Scripture, according to that Sense which the Mother Church hath holden, (whose Right is to judge of the true Sense and Interpretation of holy Scripture,) I do admit:* So that by the latter Part of the Article, they allow the Fathers to be Interpreters of the Scriptures; and by the first Part, they make themselves sole Interpreters of the Fathers; to which Addition, an ignorant Priest will swear, with a mental Reservation, that he doth not receive, nor expound the Scripture, but with the uniform Consent of Fathers; that is, according to the Sense and Judgment of the *Roman* Church: For 'tis not to be doubted, but the Church will allow of that Sense, which is most agreeable to that Doctrine, and of that Interpretation, (altho' it be far different from the Ancients,) which is most consonant to their Religion; and the

*Hof. de expresse
verb. Dei.*

rather I incline to this Opinion, for that Cardinal *Hofius* does protest it for an Universal, and Catholick Doctrine of his Church;

viz.

viz. ' If a Man have the Interpretation of the
 ' Church of *Rome* of any Place of Scripture,
 ' he hath the very Words of God, tho' he
 ' neither know, nor understand, whether,
 ' and how, it agreeth with the Words of
 ' Scripture." Now if it happen, that those
 who are better instructed, by comparing
 of Scriptures and Fathers, do make a Doubt
 of some Place of Scripture, which the Church
 teacheth different from the Fathers, Cardinal
Cusanus, by way of Prevention, gives him
 to understand, that there is *Fides Temporum*,
a Faith that follows the Times: ' Nither is it
 ' any Wonder (*saith he*) tho' the Practice
 ' of the Church expound the Scripture at one
 ' Time one Way, at another Time another
 ' Way; for the Understanding (or Sense)
 ' of the Scripture runneth with the Practice,
 ' and that Sense so agreeing with the Prac-
 ' tice, is the quickning Spirit; and, there-
 ' fore, the Scriptures follow the Church, but
 ' contrarywise the Church followeth not the
 ' Scriptures." This *Romanist* tells us, 'tis no
 wonder, the Scripture is at divers Times di-
 versly expounded; he tells us, the Scripture
 attends the Church's Pleasure; and *Lastly*,
 and which is most true, he professeth the *Ri-*
man Church followeth not the Scripture; but
 the Times.

That this Cardinal speaks Truth, I think
 no Protestant will deny; but that you may
 be Witnesses also of the Practice of these Times,
 you shall observe how fitly these Men have
 apply'd the Scripture to their Church:

*In voto Baro-
nii contra Ve-
netos.*

Whereas 'tis said to *Peter* in a Vision, *Arise, kill, and eat*; Cardinal *Baronius* being Interpreter, will tell you, The *Pope* is *Peter*, and the *Venetians* the *Meat*, which must be kill'd, and devour'd. In like manner, whereas *St. Paul* saith, *Hereticum devita, Avoid an Heretick*; the silly Fryar applies it to *Times* and *Persons*, with this Exposition; *Hereticum de vita tolle, Kill the Heretick*; meaning the *Protestant*. And in this manner according to the *Times*, the Sense runneth with the Practice; or at least, I am sure, this Practice runs with these *Times*.

Thus then you have *Fides Ecclesiae*, an Exposition of Scriptures according to the Article of the *Romish* Creed, and *Fides Temporum*, an Exposition suitable to the *Times*, and their own Doctrines. If we appeal to Scriptures, they account them dumb Judges, without the Exposition of their Church; if we require an Exposition with the Consent of Fathers, they tell us, we must admit that Sense, which the Church holdeth, whose Right is to judge of the true Sense of Scriptures: If we shew them their Expositions are senseless, or greatly disagreeing from the Ancients; they tell us, the Scriptures may receive different Expositions according to the *Times*. And thus they make the holy Scriptures sound like Bells to their knavish, and foolish Fancies, and violate their Oath with a *salvo Jure*, saving a Right to the Sense, and Meaning of their own Church. This

This Way, therefore, is *Via devia*, a Wandering, and a By-way.

In the last, and chiefeſt Place, 'tis neceſſary to obſerve the Difference betwixt the Church of *Rome*, and us moderate *Proteſtants*, touching the entire Canon of Scriptures, (for without Doubt this is the *Only*, and *Infallible Rule of Faith*;) and there is a Curſe denounced by God himſelf, againſt all thoſe, who *Add to his word, or diminish ought from it*. It ſhall appear, therefore, by many pregnant and infallible Testimonies of our Adverſaries themſelves, that the Canon of Scripture, which we profeſs and believe, was the ſame which was taught, and declar'd by the moſt holy, and immaculate Jeſus, and his Apoſtles, in the firſt Age; the ſame, which was publiſh'd, and generally receiv'd by the Ancient Fathers in ſucceeding Ages; the ſame, which continu'd in the Boſom of the *Roman Church* in all Ages, 'till the Days of *Luther*.

C H A P. III.

The Safest, and only Infallible Way to find out the TRUE CHURCH, is by the Scriptures.

WHEN the *Donatists*, in the most flourishing Times of Christian Religion, arrogantly, and presumptuously appropriated the Catholick, and Universal Church, to their Heretical, and particular

Aug. de unit. Eccles. cap. 2. Faction : St. *Austin* encountering them, states the Point of Controversy in this manner. ‘ The Question is, Where the Church should be : ‘ What then shall we do ? Shall we seek ‘ it in our own Words, or in the Words of ‘ our Lord Jesus ? In my Judgment, we ‘ ought rather to seek the Church in his ‘ own Words ; for that he *is the Truth*, and ‘ *knoweth his own Body*.

You have heard the Question propounded, and answer’d by the Oracle of that Age. Such is the Difference at this Day, betwixt the Church of *Rome* and us ; and I heartily wish, we might join Issue with them upon the like Terms, and both agree with one Consent to seek the Church of God in his Word ; then should

should we be gather'd as *Sheep to one Fold*, and the *weak in Faith* shou'd be receiv'd, not to doubtful *Disputations*, but the *Reading of the holy Scriptures*; and they, who now question the Visibility of our Church before *Luther*, wou'd first examine their own Doctrine by the Touch-stone of the Gospel; and the rather, because it is agreed on both Sides, that whatsoever Faith and Doctrine, Christ, and his Apostles taught in the first Age, the same Faith and Doctrine hath continu'd more, or less visible in all Ages. But to return to the *Donatists*, when Christ in the *Canticles*, demanded of his *Cant. 1. 7.*

Spouse, *Where she rested Meredie*, at Noon-day; the *Donatists* concluded Christ's Question with their own Answer, That the Church did rest *Meredie*, and that was in the *South*; and from this Ground, excluded all other Churches, but their own in *Africk*. The *Donatists* Claim was seemingly deriv'd from the Authority of the Scriptures (for *Donatus* and *Austin*, Heretick and Catholick, both urge the Scriptures;) but observe the Difference: *Austin* puts the whole Issue of his Cause upon the holy Scriptures; the *Donatists* claim'd their Doctrine by the Publick Voices of the *Africans*, they assum'd to themselves the Title of the *Catholick Church*; they magnify'd the Councils of their Bishops; they glory'd in their frequent, tho' feigned *Miracles*; these were the principal Grounds of their Faith, and upon these they challeng'd that great Champion of the *Western Church*;

Church; but observe what Answer he makes them. viz. ' Let the *Donatists*,
Aug. de unit. ' if they can, shew their Church,
Eccles. cap. 16. ' not in Rumours, and Speeches
 ' of the Men of *Africa*; not in
 ' the Councils of their Bishops, not in Dis-
 ' courses of any Writers whatsoever; not in
 ' Signs and Miracles that may be forged;
 ' for we are fore-warn'd by God's Word,
 ' and, therefore, fore-arm'd against these
 ' Things; but in the Prescript of the Law,
 ' in the Predictions of the Prophets, in the
 ' Verses of the Psalms, in the Voice of the
 ' Shephard himself, in the Preaching, and
 ' and Works of the Evangelists; that is, in
 ' all the Canonical Authorities of the sacred
 ' Scriptures.

If St. *Austin* had been living in these Days, either he must have retracted this Protestant Doctrine, or been reputed an Heretick; for all these Marks, which were anciently maintain'd by the *Donatists*, are proclaim'd by our Adversaries, to be visible Characters of the True Church: Neither did this Learned Father require more of the *Donatists*, than the Catholics of those Times were willing to perform on their Parts; and, therefore, he binds himself to the same Conditions, which he requir'd of his Adversaries, and withal, renders the Reason of his Demand, *Quia nec nos propterea dicimus, &c.* ' Because we
Aug. de unit. ' ourselves do not say, we must,
Eccles. cap. 16. ' therefore, be believ'd, for that we are in
 ' the

' the Church of Christ ; or else for that *Opta-*
 ' *tus* and *Ambrose*, and infinite other Bishops
 ' of our Communion, have commended the
 ' Church which we hold ; or because our
 ' Church hath been publish'd in the Councils
 ' of our Colleagues ; or because in all Places
 ' of the World, where our Communion is
 ' frequented, there are so many Miracles
 ' wrought." This was the Doctrine of St.
Austin, and the Antient Fathers, and this is
 ours of the moderate Church of *England* ;
 they requir'd no more of the *Donatists*, but
 to lay aside all Pretended Titles, and rely
 only on the Word of God ; we offer to the
Romanists, and their restless and bigotted Par-
 tizans, no less than to accept the same Con-
 ditions upon Trial of that Title, and rely
 only upon that Word.

I must confess, I think a more speedy Way
 might have been found, to have given an
 Answer to the Controversies of that Age :
 For St. *Austin* might have pointed at the
 Church in the *West*, which was then as con-
 spicuous as the Sun at Noon-day ; he might
 have answer'd them, it was *A City upon a*
Hill, which was visible to all. He might
 have produc'd the Apostle for a Witness,
 that her Faith was publish'd throughout the World :
 He might have confuted them with Sacred
 Councils, and Doctrine of the Ancient Fa-
 thers, and confirm'd his Truth with the
 Death of constant Martyrs, who seal'd their
 Doctrine with their Blood, as Witnesses of
 the True Faith. Certainly, all these Proofs

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were

were pregnant in his Time, and he might easily have produc'd them in Behalf of his Church, (as our Adversaries do for theirs;) but he left these Brags to these latter Times, and sends them to the Law, and to the Testimonies, to the Word of the immaculate Jesus, that speaketh better Things than was possible

for Man to utter; and 'To that Aug. Psal. 69. 'End (saith he) thou mightest

'not err in the Church, and lest 'any Man shou'd say *This is Christ*, who is 'not Christ; or *This is the Church*, which is 'not the Church; hear the Voice of the Shepherd, he hath shew'd thee the Church, that 'the Name of the Church may not deceive 'thee." The Sum and Substance of this

Doctrine of St. Austin's is this, That neither Bishops, nor Councils, nor Miracles, nor Rumours of the Catholick Name, do demonstrate the Church of God to be Catholick (for all these are common to Hereticks as well as Catholics;) but the holy Scriptures, which bear the Testimony of the holy Jesus, they only carry the infallible Marks of his

Aug. Ep. 166. Truth; and 'In them (saith he) we have known Christ; 'in them we have known the Church.

Neither was this the Opinion of St. Austin only, for St. Chrysostom, as a wise Master-Builder in this House, gave this Caveat to the

Workmen in After-Ages; viz. Chrys. in opere imperf. Hom. 49. 'It can no way be known which 'is the True Church (*nisi tantum modo per Scripturas*) but only by 'the

‘ the Scriptures; otherwise if they had Regard to other Things, they shou’d be offended, and perish, and not understand which is the True Church.” And lastly, the Learned Father *Irenæus* assures us, *Non per alios, &c.* ‘ By no other have we known the Way of our Salvation, but by them, by whom the Gospel came to us, which verily, they then preach’d, and afterwards, by the Will of God, deliver’d the same to us in the Scriptures, to be the FOUNDATION, and PILLAR of our FAITH.

Tell me, then, in this latter Age, and Time of Controversy, how shall the Religious Man, who loves Truth, and seeks Comfort, resolve himself? To which CHURCH shall he safely join himself, when, perhaps, he wants the Learning, or the Leisure, to look backward for almost 1700 Years, and rightly examine the Doctrine of both Churches? If he seek the moderate *Protestant Church*, behold She being poor comparatively, and despised for want of continu’d outward Eminency, is become a stumbling Block to the *Ignorant, the Proud, and the Covetous*. If we view the *Roman Church*, behold, She is array’d in Purple, and Scarlet Colour, and decked with Gold, and precious Stones, and the *Inhabitants of the Earth have been made drunk with the Wine of her Fornications, and they that follow her, wonder with great Admiration*. And without doubt, the Pope’s Triple Crowns, the Golden Crosses, the Legends of Saints,

the Multitude of *professed Orders*, their Pomp in *Processions*, their rich Cloathing of *Images*, their *Pretended POWER* of their modest, honest, and pious *Priesthood*, the great Rumour of their *Catholick Cause*, their *Jubilees* and *Pardons*, their *Merits* and *Miracles*, do so dazle the *Eyes* of the ignorant, and common People, that they think there is no Church True and Visible, but the *Roman Church*: And certainly, the Case thus standing, we have no better Plea for our Church, than the great Father St. *Austin* made to *Petilian*,

Aug. cont. lit. Pet. lib. 2. c. 85 the *Donatist*, ‘Whether of us be
‘*Schismatics*, we, or you; ask
‘you not me, I will not ask
‘you; let Christ be asked, that he may shew
‘us his own Church.

Campion, the Jesuit, who formerly made his Claim to all Fathers and Councils, now in the Name of the Church insults the *Protestants*: viz. ‘So soon as the Ad-

Camp. Rat. 3. ‘versary heard the Church nam-
‘ed, he waxed wan, and pale.’

I confess, indeed, it wou’d terrify a religious and sober Man, to hear such frequent *Blasphemies* utter’d against the Majesty of God’s Word, and to sound out nothing but the Honour and Authority of the Church; who can but wax wan and pale out of Pity and Charity, to hear the Church nam’d, and yet see that she has kept the Name only, and lost her wonted Nature? Who can but become wan and pale, even as Death, to see her spoiled of her Jewels and Treasury of the Sa-
cred

cred Scriptures, and retain only the Casket and Boxes ; (the bare Name of a Church,) where those Jewels lay ? Look upon the best learned of the *Roman* Church, and tell me, if they will not astonish a true believing Christian, and make him change his Countenance, to hear such odious Comparisons betwixt the Scripture, and the

Church : ‘ The Church (*saith Stapleton*) is an infallible Foundation of Faith in a higher kind than the Scripture ; for the Scripture is but a Foundation in Testimony and Matter to be believ’d ; but the Church is the efficient Cause of Faith, and in some sort the very formal :

Stapl. Relect. contro. 4. q. 4. 21. 3. & 9. 3. ar. 1.

Nay more, ‘ If both of them be properly consider’d, and compar’d together, the Church is a more noble Subject than the Scripture ; yea, the Church hath such Authority, that she may set at Liberty, or seal up the Scriptures themselves : Yes, (says *Hosius*) a Man may speak it in a good and godly Sense, the Scriptures are of no more Account, without the Authority of the Church, than *Esop’s* Fables.

Relect. princ. fid. dog. con. 4. q. 5.

Hof. 1. 3. de aut. sac. Scripturæ.

Neither let this seem strange, that the *Romanists*, and their Partizans, insist principally upon the Authority of the Church ; for he, who shall look back, and observe how the sacred Scriptures are condemn’d for Obscurity and Insufficiency ; he who will consider how

how the holy Fathers are censur'd, and re-
jected by them as counterfeit, or erroneous ;
he who shall note the *Decrees*, and *Canon* of
Councils condemn'd as spurious, or superfluous ;
he, I say, who considers these Things, will not
wonder, that our Adversaries fly to the *Roman*
Church ; and for this special Cause advance
the Name of the Church above all. Cardinal
Cusanus, by way of Objection, puts the Question
to the *Bohemians*, whether they were better to
obey the Word of God, or the

Nich. Cusa. ad
Proem. Epi. 2.

Church ; ' You say, we must first
' obey Christ's Commandments ;
' and afterwards the Church ;

' and if the Church commands us to do other-
' wise than Christ commands, we must obey
' Christ, and not the Church." 'Tis true,
the *Protestants* rightly propose that Question,
which (without all doubt) can't otherwise be
resolv'd ; but pray observe what Answer he
makes them : viz. ' Verily, here-

Idem Epist. 3.

' in standeth the Beginning of all
' Presumption, when particular

' Men think their own Judgments to be more
' agreeable to God's Commandments, than
' the Judgment of the Universal Church : "

Nay, he puts the Question further, viz. ' Per-
' haps, you will say, How shall Christ's Com-
' mandments be changed by the Authority of
' the Church, that they shall bind us when the
' Church shall see it good ? I tell thee (saith
' he) there is nothing to be taken for Christ's
' Commandments, unless it be so allow'd of
the Church : When the Church hath once
' changed

‘ changed her Judgment, God’s Judgment is
 ‘ likewise changed.” Cardinal *Hofius* gives his
 Consent with Cardinal *Cusanus*, and more
 plainly resolves the Question in few Words;
viz. ‘ Whatsoever the Church
 ‘ teacheth, is the exprefs Word *Hof. de expref-*
 ‘ of God, and whatsoever is *so verbo Dei.*
 ‘ taught against the Sense and
 ‘ Meaning of the Church, is the exprefs Word
 ‘ of the Devil.

I confess, the Name of the Church is honourable, and her Credit singular; but that which sticks with me, and, as I conceive, is worthy of all Mens Observation and Consideration; the Name of the Church, which is so much ador’d and magnify’d of all *Romanists*, and their *Profelites*, and *Partizans*, I say, that *Roman Church* is neither understood by the unlearned what it is, neither is it resolv’d by the learned amongst them, what is properly meant and understood by it.

First then, we know, as the Church has many Parts to act; so the *Romanists* make her of four several Sorts: The *Essential Church*, and ‘ This (says *Bellarmino*) is a Company
 ‘ of Men professing the same Christian Faith
 ‘ and Sacraments, and acknowledging the Bishop of *Rome* to be the Chief Pastor, and
 ‘ Vicar of Christ upon the Earth. The *Representative Church*; and this is an Assembly
 ‘ of Bishops in a *General Council*, representing
 ‘ the whole Body of the Church. The *Vertual Church*; and this is the Bishop of *Rome*, who
 ‘ is said to be the Chief Pastor of the whole
 ‘ Church,

Church, and hath in himself eminently;
 and virtually, both Truth and Infallibi-
 lity of Judgment, and upon whom depend-
 eth all that Certainty of Truth; which is
 found in the whole Church. The *Consisto-*
rial Church; and this consists of the *Pope*
 and *Cardinals*, and is termed
Curia Romana. by the *Sorbonists*, *The Court of*
Rome. As to these several
 Acceptations of the Church, there are several, and very different Opinions. The Gloss upon *Gratian* puts the first Question, and thus resolves it: 'I wou'd know what Church
 you understand, when you say, *It cannot*
err. I answer, It is the Congregation of
 the Faithful, which is here meant by the
 Church. To the second *Bellarmino* replies,
 A lawful Council, by the most general Con-
 sent, may be most properly termed the
 Church." To the third, *Gretzerus*, the Je-
 suit, makes this Confession; 'I deny not,
 but by the Church we understand the Bi-
 shop of *Rome* for the Time being, who
 guides the Ship of the Militant Church:
 And *Gregory de Valentia*, 'By the Church we
 mean her Head; that is to say, the *Roman*
 Bishop, in whom resides the full Autho-
 rity of the Church." To the fourth, *Marsilius Patavinus* gives his free Assent: 'That
 the Name of the Church is of great Con-
 sequence amongst the modern Writers,
 whose Ministers and Presidents are the
 Pope and Cardinals, which by Use and Cus-
 tom, have, at last, obtain'd to be call'd
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‘ *The Church.* ’ And of this Church the *Pope* himself has made this Declaration, *viz.* ‘ Ye shall be the Senators of my City, and like unto Kings; the very Hooks and Stays of the World, upon whom the very Door of the Church Militant must be turned, and ruled. ’ Now amidst those different Opinions, it must needs seem questionable, to which of these Churches a poor, honest, and ignorant Soul (who desires Satisfaction in Matters of Religion) should address himself : If he require Judgment of the *Essential Church*, there is little Comfort, and less Assurance to be had from them; for they consist most of the ignorant and common People, and have the greatest Need of Instruction themselves : Besides, ’tis impossible to know the Judgment of all Christians, (who compose the Universal Church) in all, or in any Points of Religion. If he appeal to *Councils*, their being duly call’d is often uncertain, their *Decrees* and *Canons* are doubtful, for many of them are adjudg’d by themselves Erroneous, many spurious and counterfeit : If he would consult with the *Pope* and *Cardinals* in their *Consistory*, it is a Journey too costly and tedious; and let me add, it will appear they are subject to Error.

In the next Place (God permitting) shall be examin’d the *Infallibility* of particular Churches; and in particular, that we enquire, whether the *Roman Church* be that Church, which we are commanded to hear and obey, by the Direction and Authority of the Holy Scriptures.

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To give the Church of *Rome* her Due, let us take a short Survey of her first Foundation, and we shall see what Priviledge did anciently belong to her, and what Authority she claims at this Day.

First, the Apostle *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Romans*, congratulates with them, and sends them *this* Greeting : *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be Saints* : He testifies further, with Prayer and Thanksgiving, that *their Faith was spoken of throughout the whole World* : Nay, more, he makes an Earnest Request to God, that he might see the Members of that Church, and impart spiritual Gifts to them, *to the End they might be establish'd* : These Testimonies of the Apostle were special Characters of an Eminent and Glorious Church, (altho' in Truth there is not so much as this Name of a Church giv'n to the *Romans* in all the Scriptures, unless they will allow the Church at *Babylon* to be the Church of *Rome* ;) and here was a probable Assurance of continu'd Stability and Perseverance of her Faith in all Ages ; but behold, the same Apostle, who did so much glory in Behalf of their Catholick Faith, who gave God Thanks for them ; who pray'd for the Continuance of that Faith ; *For God is my witness, (says he) without ceasing I make mention of you always in my Prayers.* As if he had foreseen by the Spirit of Prophecy, they wou'd glory in their Worth and Merits, soon after in his Eleventh Chapter of the same Epistle gives them this special Caveat ; *Be not high-minded, but fear* ; and withal gives a special Reason of that

that Caveat : viz. For if God spared not the natural Branches, take heed also lest he spare not thee ; behold, therefore, the Bountifulness and Severity of God ; towards them that have fall'n Severity ; but towards thee Goodness, if thou continue in his Goodness ; otherwise also thou shalt be cut off. This Doctrine does trench so far on the present State of the Church of Rome, that the *Rhemists* forbear their Annotation on this Place ; for the Truth is, these last Words, viz. *Thou shalt be cut off*, plainly intimate, that the Church of Rome from the Time of the Apostles, had a Possibility of falling ; and consequently, was but a particular Church ; for so it befel the Church of *Jerusalem*, and much more (*says the Apostle*) may it befal the Church of Rome.

Let us compare the Testimonies, and Promises, in Behalf of the *Roman Church*, with other particular, and famous Churches in the Time of the Apostles, and see whether these Promises did more largely extend to the Faith of the *Roman Church*, than to other Churches. *St. Paul*, (writing to the *Thessalonians*, terming them by the Name of the Church) gives this large Testimony in their Behalf ; viz. *From you sounded out the Word of the Lord, 1 Thes. 1. 8. not only in Macedonia and Achia, but your Faith, which is toward God, is gone forth into all Places, that we have no need to speak any thing : Yea more, he gives them a kind of Assurance for the Perpetuity of their Faith ; viz. The Lord is faithful, and will establish you, and keep you from all Evil : Yet 2 Thes. 3. 3. this Church is fallen away, and has*

lost her first Faith. The *Ephesians* are expressly said by the Apostle, to be *The Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of Truth*. And for this Church the Apostle makes this Confession, *I bow my Knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant you according to the Riches of his Glory, to be strengthen'd with Might by his Spirit in the inner Man*: Yet we know, this Church, which was the *Ground, and Pillar of Truth*, and for which the Apostle earnestly pray'd, is ras'd to the Ground, and utterly fallen from the Truth. The *Corinthians* are termed by St. Paul *The Church of God, called to be Saints*. And this Church is further witnessed by the same Apostle, that *She was rich in all Things thro' Christ, in all kinds of Speech and Knowledge, and that she was not destitute of any Gift*: Nay more, he delivers confidently in Behalf of that Church, that *God would establish them unto the End, even the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ*. Yet soon after, some of them deny'd the *Resurrection*; they fell from the Truth, and are now subject to the *Turks*. If then the Church of the *Thessalonians*, of the *Ephesians*, of the *Corinthians*, (touching the outward Face and Visibilty of Local, and Particular Churches) if they are all fallen, notwithstanding such fair Testimonies and large Promises in their Behalf, (which also were accomplish'd in the Elect) what Stability could the Church of *Rome* promise to herself, which had not so much as the Name of a Church, but was threaten'd upon the Breach of a Condition, that *She also should be cut off*? Whether the Condition be broken, or nor, I will another time dispute, and prove effectually by God's Permission; but this I will now assert, If the *Jews* being the Lord's peculiar People, and the natural Branches, were broken off; how much more the Church of *Rome*, being but a wild Olive Branch, might be cut off from the Faith of Christ? No doubt the Spirit of God foresaw, that the *Romanists* wou'd glory in the Name of the Church, and advance that Name above his Word; and therefore, (as I humbly conceive) the Word of God gave not so much as a Name of a Church, nor Promise of *Infallibility* and *Perseverance* unto it, but a special Caveat to put them in Mind *not to be high-minded*.

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